THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) During the months of October and November 2005, prices of onion increased on account of lower arrivals in major wholesale markets in the country in October, 2005 due to erratic and excessive rainfall particularly in major onion growing States of Maharashtra and Gujarat which adversely affected the kharif onion crops in those States. Prices of potato increased due to lower level of kharif crop in Maharashtra and Karnataka largely because of inadequate and delayed rains. Prices of all other essential commodities by and large remained stable.

Government and its agencies are implementing several schemes intended to enhance production of, *inter alia*, onion and potato. The more important schemes are given below:-

(i) Government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on National Horticulture Mission since May, 2005.

(ii) The National Horticulture Board is implementing schemes such as

(a) Development of Commercial Horticulture through Production and Post-Harvest Management;

(b) Capital Investment Subsidy for Construction/Modernisation/ Expansion of Cold Storage and Storages for Horticulture Produce; and

(c) Technology Development and Transfer for Promotion of Horticulture.

MSP for Rajasthan crops

†*155. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state whether there is any scheme to buy main crops from Rajasthan such as gwar, corriander, cumin, isabgol, onion and garlic at support price?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): These crops are not covered under the scheme of Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) fixed by the Government for major agricultural crops. However, the Government implements the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for procurement of horticultural and perishable agricultural commodities. In order to protect the growers of such commodities, MIS is implemented for a particular commodity on the request of the State Government, provided

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

the concerned State Government is ready to bear 50% of the loss (25% in case of North Eastern States), in its implementation.

Decline in growth rate of foodgrain production

*156. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that annual growth rate of foodgrain production has slipped from 16 per cent in 1991-96 to merely 2.9 per cent in 2001-05;

(b) if so, the reasons for such a fall; and

(c) the special steps contemplated for the last phase of the Tenth Five Year Plan to improve this growth rate and the targets fixed for these years?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) No, Sir. The annual average growth rate of foodgrains production during the period 1990-91 to 1995-96 was only 0.57%, as against 2.06% during the period 2000-01 to 2004-05.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) For the year 2005-06, the target of foodgrains production has been fixed at 215.00 million tonnes which would give a growth rate of 5% over the preceding year. The target for the terminal year of the Tenth Plan, i.e. 2006-07 will be fixed before the commencement of the ensuing agricultural year. To achieve this growth, several schemes/initiatives are under implementation which include: (i) Integrated Crop Development Programme (ICDP) for Wheat, Rice, Coarse Cereals; (ii) Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM); (iii) Efforts are on to Enhance Sustainability of Dry Land Farming Systems in the arid and semi arid regions of the country particularly in the districts having low annual rainfall and less coverage under assured irrigation; (iv) Enhancing irrigation efficiency, including increasing areas under micro irrigation; (v) Increasing production and productivity of crops through research and extension.

Model stations in Uttar Pradesh

†*157. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any plan to give model look to some of the stations in the State of Uttar Pradesh under the Tenth Five Year Plan;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.